

Honoring Our Veterans



Today (Friday), we celebrate Veterans Day by remembering the sacrifices these men and women made on behalf of our citizens and people around the world.

The photo above was taken yesterday at Cedar Crest High School, where I was asked to speak at their Veterans Day ceremony. I mentioned how very thankful I am for the community support I have received from the veterans in our community. The grateful spirit of our families and children who support those of us who serve and have served our country in the military leaves me forever thankful for the great gifts of family, community, and faith.

[Please click here](#) to view a recording of the ceremony.

Veterans Day, originally known as Armistice Day, first marked the one-year anniversary of the end of World War I, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month and sought to honor the veterans of the World War – the only world war to have occurred at that time. Armistice Day was declared a national holiday in 1938 to acknowledge world peace, and then was renamed Veterans Day in 1954 to celebrate the contributions of veterans of all wars.

For more about the history of Veterans Day, [click here](#).

For more information about programs and benefits to support our veterans in Pennsylvania, visit the state [Department of Military and Veterans Affairs here](#).

Also, the General Assembly recently adopted a new law, [Act 129 of 2022](#), designating June 12 of each year as Women Veterans Day in the Commonwealth. There are currently more than 71,000 female veterans residing in Pennsylvania. And, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, by 2040 it is estimated that women will make up roughly 17% of the total veteran population.

Recognizing Service Members and Their Families

A new state law offers military family members the opportunity to obtain a “Blue Star Family” specialty license plate in recognition of their loved one’s service.

[Act 112 of 2022](#) requires PennDOT to issue a Blue Star Family license plate to any family member of a person who is an active-duty military service member, including those in the reserve or National Guard. The plate will cost an additional \$23 on top of the registration fee. Plates will not have to be returned once the family member no longer serves on active duty.



A family member includes a spouse, mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, stepmother, stepfather, stepson, stepdaughter, mother or father through adoption, foster mother or father in loco parentis, son or daughter by adoption, half-brother, half-sister, grandfather or grandmother.

The same law also creates a special plate for Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans. The new plates will become available from PennDOT after the law takes effect next year.

New Law Supports Justice for Crime Victims

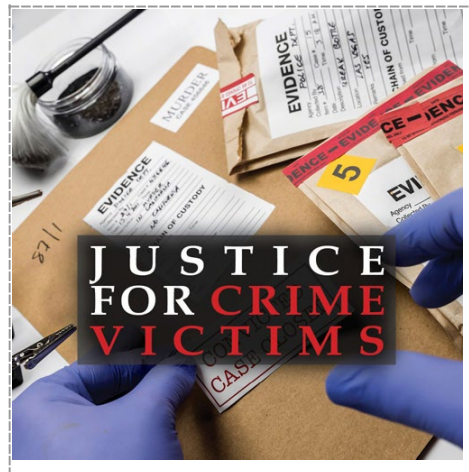
Crime victims in the Commonwealth will have better access to investigative information about their cases under a new state law.

[Act 134 of 2022](#) makes it easier for crime victims to obtain relevant information learned by law enforcement during the investigation of a crime to possibly use that information in subsequent civil actions to recover damages.

It creates a simple process by which crime victims can request dissemination of criminal history investigative information which is relevant to a civil action arising out of the crime, provided the victim swears under penalty of law that the information is material and necessary to the civil action. The information can then only be used for the civil lawsuit; any harassing, intimidating or threatening use of the information would be punishable as a crime.

The measure will take effect in about six months and is the latest effort by state House Republicans to stand up for victims of crime and fight back against perpetrators and those who choose not to enforce the Commonwealth's laws.

[Learn more about our Smart Justice efforts here.](#)



Protecting Police from Assaults

Pennsylvania police officers now have a new level of protection if assaulted with bodily fluids.

[Act 99 of 2022](#) makes it a criminal offense to assault a police officer with bodily fluids, such as saliva. The law outlines an assault must be deliberate, rather than a case of accidental spitting that could occur during a heated exchange.

Typically, when officers are assaulted with spit or bodily fluids, they must undergo medical testing to see if they contracted a virus, such as HIV. Such assaults take police officers off the street, preventing them from fully doing their jobs and protecting people in their communities.

The law takes effect in approximately two months.



New Law Targets Dangerous Driving

Working to prevent dangerous driving and improve highway safety, a new state law requires the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to create a mandatory driver improvement program for drivers who accumulate six points or more on their licenses.

Under [Act 120 of 2022](#) this program would be required as a way to reduce points from a driver's record, and when a driver is convicted of exceeding the speed limit by more than 30 miles per hour. The course would also be required when applying for an Occupational Limited License and Probationary

License and would be a condition for license reinstatement following suspension due to point accumulation or excessive speeding.

In 2020, PennDOT reported 1,129 motor vehicle-related fatalities despite a significant reduction in vehicle miles traveled in the pandemic. Because most of these crashes were caused by driver behavior, the training course required under the law would employ established and effective strategies to change the decision-making processes of traffic offenders and move them to make better driving choices.



The program is expected to become effective in 14 months.

PennDOT Driver License, Photo Centers Closed for Veterans Day



All PennDOT driver license and photo centers, including its full-service center in Harrisburg, will be closed Friday, Nov. 11, in observance of Veterans Day.

Customers may still obtain a variety of driver and vehicle products and services, including all forms, publications and driver training manuals, through [PennDOT's online Driver and Vehicle Services website](#).